

confessions of

there is absolu
i can do, befor

i can't even re

least me on my

confessions of a caffeine addict

there is absolutely nothing
i can do, before my first cup of coffee.
i can't even remember that it's you, who
kept me on my side of the bed last night, sane
enough in sleep to keep this tangle free,
but not in the morning. god,

my eys aren't ready for sunlight, or
all that hair spilling on your back, the hair
that finally convinced me it had to be
you, had to be
at least for the moment when i walked up
and kissed you, a stranger, without
warning, pulled you out of the bar with my tongue
knowing that with you still in shock
i could do anything, because unlike me
you weren't accustomed
to the space around you being
penetrated, or maybe you felt special, believed me
when i told you i don't usually do this kind of thing
not realizing you were just
the next round of my personal
eternal return. but now

christ, your eyes are open expectant and
i curse the coffee machine for gurgling you awake
and the smell simmering in the kitchen, which
i now realize must seem welcoming, probably
creates the illusion
i was thinking of you, but
fuck, it's sunday, i'm hung over

wouldn't help to pretend i have a day job
or a doctor's appointment, send you out with
your coffee to go in the politically suspect
styrofoam cups i keep for such occasions. no
daylight slaps me with responsibility
for my occasional
conviction that sex is political activism and that
the uncompromising slut will be the real
hero of the revolution. but you see

i have to keep from half-hating you, because
i'd rather ignore the fact
that despite myself i want to be chosen,
not choose, want that essential woman thing i don't
believe in to pull you to me. you see?
i tried to abdicate the throne of Woman, knowing
it was a shaky pedestal anyway, that teeters
unbalanced under bulimic silence,
puked up, ugly, excessive
the moment you aren't looking, or simply collapses
about the time we'd get checked for hiv, stds
and any other infections and our love looks
slip off with the last condom. but it's rough
down here without the sly looks,
affected innocence, girl-trick
indifference that would keep you,
keep my currency intact. but

your eyes are open, so
what would you like in your coffee,
drink up and
kiss me, kiss me baby, before
this becomes a confessional.

luba szkambara

Write something is for you,
you are for you; your
body is yours. take it....

index magazine

TRIAL

ature/performance listings

may 1995

ind
ex

let no one lead you back, let
nothing stop you: not man; not
the imbecilic capitalist machin-
ery, in which polishing houses
are the crafty, obsequious relay-
ers of imperatives handed down
by an economy that works
against us and off our backs;
and the Smug-faced
readers, nagging editors, and
big bosses don't like the true
texts of women—female-sexed
texts. That kind scares them.

Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa", 1976

Peter Dubé # Lub szkambara # D&Q Review

Writing in Feminine in 1995

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ex



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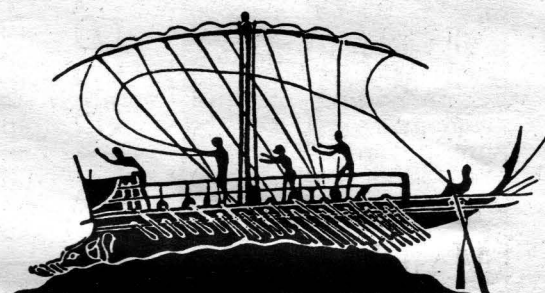
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Public Readings

May 4th, from 7 to 8:30 P.M.

Mark Abley and Anna Fuerstenberg.

May 18th, from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Carolyn Zonailo and Stephen Morrissey

The readings will be at the Dollard des Ormeaux Library Atrium
12001 Boul. de Salaberry, D.D.O.
information: FEWQ 934-2485

index

editorial

Almost 20 years have passed since the words on the cover of this *index* were first published. Cixous is a widely recognized and solidly respected theorist and writer, and the debate in which hers was one of the early most influential voices has undergone massive slow transformations and quiet subtle ones. Yet her vision of women's writing and what it will do is still trying to find its footing in a struggle for recognition, affirmation. In the nineties in particular, and as far as *index* is concerned, part of that struggle is located in queer writing: writing that resists normalization, writing that thematically and textually undermines socialized constructs like "gender," "race," or "sexual identity." It does not have to do with who the author sleeps with, but with what sort of dreams she has.

There have always been those uncertain, poetic beings, who have not let themselves be reduced to the state of coded man -

nequins by the relentless repression of the homosexual component. Men or women, complex, mobile, open beings. Admitting the component of the other sex makes them at once much richer, plural, strong, and to the extent of this mobility, very fragile. We invent only on this condition: thinkers, artists, creators of new values, 'philosophers' of the mad Nietzschean sort, inventors and destroyers of concepts, of forms, the changers of life cannot but be agitated by singularities — complementary or contradictory. This does not mean that in order to create you must be homosexual. But there is no invention possible, whether it be philosophical or poetic, without the presence in the inventing subject of an abundance of the other, of the diverse: persons-detached, persons-thought, peoples born of the unconscious, and in each desert, suddenly animated, a springing forth of self that we did not know about — our women, our monsters, our jackals, our Arabs, our fellow-creatures, our fears.

(Cixous)

Next Month

- # **Fringe Magnates:** Montreal writers become producers and directors in the Fringe Festival.
- # **Tessera:** an interview with the editors of and contributors to this challenging bilingual journal.
- AND...** The reviews section Echoes with Fluffy Pagans. The members of F.P.E. give their picks.

available June 1st.

index magazine is an index to literature and performance events in Montréal, a lover of new writing, and a place to enter difference and discussion about word production.

publisher **Stephanie Blainshay**
 editor **Corey Frost**
 writings editor **Pat Salah**
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LISTINGS are free.

Tell us about your upcoming event. Call (or fax) our office number 495-1847. The deadline is five days before the beginning of the month when you would like the listing to appear.

LETTERS are free too.

We welcome your letters to the editor, about our magazine or any topic conceivably related to writing or the writing community; they will be featured on this page. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.

SUBMISSIONS are free, replies are not. Please send your prose, poetry, or textual hybrids to us, but please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Bear in mind

our space limitations: under 3,000 decent-sized words. Non-fiction pieces or proposals are also welcome. We gladly accept submissions of books and things for review.

ADVERTISING is not free.

We like to support other small organizations like us by offering reduced advertising rates to independent bookstores and small publishers. **index** magazine survives on ad revenue, so we need your support too. Call 495-1847.

CLASSIFIEDS are almost free.

index has a classified section where you'll find calls for submissions, contests, writerly propositions, etc. The charge is 10¢/word.

index ONLINE

In co-operation with The Mirror, **index** is going online this month as a part of Babylon. Dial 393-1543 with your modem to log on to Babylon (check The Mirror if you need help), and look for the literature conference. There are plans for a writing workshop as well as the regularly-updated listings.

Word is

Enough said for now. Monday, May 1
 The **Enough Said** reading series organized by Lee Gotham is coming to a seasonal close after a fall, winter, and spring of enthusiastic response. The weekly event has attracted the attention of virtually all the media in the city at one point or another, but if you still haven't seen yourself on T.V., you'll have one last chance on the first of the month, at "Apocalyp's Whimper," the last regular show for now. Lee Gotham, Ann Diamond, and Ian Stephens will perform, and you will experience Lynn Suderman's mind-bendin' **MegaText MeltDown** (part 3 of her epic quaternity). Sounds like a show-stopper to me. During the summer **Enough Said** will be scheduling occasional shows, and the weekly ritual will begin again in the fall.

507 or 843-3685.

Enough Said
 mances at Bist
 St. Laurent and
 every Monday
 open mic segn
 mard perform

Tuesday, May 9

In a parallel development, **VOX HUNT**, "the official Montréal poetry slam," is happening again this month at Bar Maître Renard. The rules have changed slightly, to the New York standard: there are five judges, and the highest and lowest scores are dropped. Sign up at 8:00 sharp with your \$5 entry fee, or pay \$2 to watch and heckle. The first prize is still a juicy \$105, which last month went to **David Jaeger**. Jaeger has been asked back to perform as a featured guest this time, along with **Lynn Suderman**, **Ann Diamond**, and **ga**. If you want to join the fray, remember: 1) your own work, 2) no props (paper is O.K.), and 3) three minutes and three minutes only. For more information, you can phone 985-3208. Bar Maître Renard, 4910 St. Laurent.

Slar
 profit, right h
 and veteran
VOX HUNT
 Montréal poetry slam
 sign up at 8:15 (with

May 10, 11, 12, 13

Letters of Fire and Sword were delivered in Medieval Scotland when things got out of hand — the government would give up, handing permission to pillage and slaughter to whomever could keep things under control. This led to some disagreements. In their dance/spoken word performance **Of Fire and Sword**, choreographer **Cameron McMaster** and **Justin McGrail** (of the **Fluffy Pagan Echoes**) explore how this practice and others led to the virtual extinction of the Highland Scots. It's playing May 10-13 at the Strathearn Centre. For info call 948-2575.



Of considerable note this month to lovers of books is the opening of the new location of **Nebula** books, which is also the proprietor of **danger!** books on St. Laurent. The new store is opening at 1832 Ste. Catherine St. West, and everyone is invited to come visit the party, starting at noon on the 23rd. **Nebula** is one of the best bookstores in the city and it's good to see it growing.

more than you can ge
 diary of a Tradema
 available at danger!
 word, and Cheap Th

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READINGS

Monday, May 1

8:30 p.m. **Les Maux-dits/Mots-dits**: open stage poetry, interactive theatre and music every Monday. Maison de la Culture Mondiale. 3812 St. Laurent. 284-5198.

9:00 p.m. **Enough Said** — "Apocalyp's Whimper" **Ann Diamond**, **Lee Gotham**, **Lynn Suderman**, and **Ian Stephens** Bistro 4, 4040 St. Laurent. 278-5939 see p. 3

Tuesday, May 2

7:00 p.m. **The Beggar's Opera: Destination Freedom**, by **Ron Spurles** and **Donna Forde**. PWM office at the Strathearn Centre, 3680 Jeanne Mance, room 310. Free. 487-7807 or 843-3685.

Thursday, May 4

7:00 p.m. **FEWQ** and The Canada Council present readings by **Mark Abley** and **Anna Fuerstenberg**. Dollard des Ormeaux Library Atrium, 12001 Boul. de Salaberry, Dollard des Ormeaux. Free. 934-2485.

Friday, May 5

7:00 p.m. **The Urban Wanderers** present readings by **David Homel**, author of *Sonya's Jack*, and **Douglas Burnet Smith**, author of *Two Minutes for Holding*. Atwater Library, 1200 Atwater. Free. 484-3186.

Saturday, May 6

8:00 p.m. **The Playwrights' Workshop Montreal** present a reading of **Don Druick's** *Barocco Romano*, a dark play of history set in Rome, 1625-1680. Director: Richard Rose, Dramaturgy: Peter Smith, Lise Ann Johnson and Deena Aziz. Strathearn Centre, 3680 Jeanne Mance. Admission is by donation. 843-3685.

Sunday, May 7

10:00 a.m. **Books & Breakfast** with moderator **Claire Rothman** and **Timothy Findley**, author of *The Piano Man's Daughter*; **David Homel**, author of *Sonya's Jack*; and **Gerald Clark**, author of *No Mud on the Back Seat*. Ritz-Carlton, 1228 Sherbrooke West. \$20. 845-5811 or 987-2509. See box.

The Gazette and Paragraphe are once again presenting **Books & Breakfast**, a series of Sunday brunches with readings, signings, and an elegant full-course breakfast. The price of admission is \$20, plus GST, which includes the price of the (we assume very decadent) breakfast. Tickets can be obtained at Paragraphe, 2065 Mansfield, or at the Gazette, 250 St. Antoine West. For info, call Richard King at 845-5811 or Reena Santini at 987-2509.

Monday, May 8

8:30 p.m. **Les Maux-dits/Mots-dits**: open stage poetry, interactive theatre and music every Monday. Maison de la Culture Mondiale. 3812 St. Laurent. 284-5198.

Tuesday, May 9

8:00 p.m. **Vox Hunt**, the official Montreal Poetry Slam. **Ann Diamond**, **Lynn Suderman**, **David Jaeger**, ga. Bar Maître Renard, 4910 St. Laurent. \$2. 985-3208. see p. 3

8:00 p.m. **The Double Hook Book Shop** presents a reading by poet **Sonya Skarstedt**. Double Hook, 1235A Greene Avenue. Free. 932-5093.

Thursday, May 11

7:30 p.m. **Articule** presents **The \$5 Cabaret**, with poetry and music. \$5. Salle Lion d'Or, 1676 Ontario E. Metro Papineau. 842-9686 see box.

Friday, May 12

8:00 p.m. **Corridors** presents a reading by **Gary Geddes**. Bistro 4, 4040 St. Laurent. Free 932-5663.

Sunday, May 14

10:00 a.m. **Books & Breakfast** with moderator **Josh Freed** and **Julius Melnitzer**, author of *Maximum, Minimum, Medium: A Journey Through Canadian*

Prisons; **Charles Foran**, author of *The Last House of Ulster*; and **Allen Abel**, author of *Flatbush Odyssey*. Ritz-Carlton, 1228 Sherbrooke West. \$20. 845-5811. See box.

Monday, May 15

8:30 p.m. **Les Maux-dits/Mots-dits**: open stage poetry, interactive theatre and music every Monday. Maison de la Culture Mondiale. 3812 St. Laurent. 284-5198.

Tuesday, May 16

7:00 p.m. **The Beggar's Opera: Glass Eye**, by **Coralie Duchesne**. PWM office at the Strathearn, 3680 Jeanne Mance, room 310. Free. 487-7807 or 843-3685.

8:00 p.m. **The Double Hook Book Shop** presents **Akhtar Maraghi** reading from her latest novel in 12 stories, *The Big Green House*. Double Hook, 1235A Greene Avenue. Free. 932-5093.

Wednesday, May 17

9:00 p.m. **The Boomerang Lounge** presents **OUMA Seeks OUZO** with readings by **Dana Bath**, **Corey Frost**, **Laura Killam**, **Patrick Salah**, and guests, with D.J. & musical open mic. Bar Boomerang, 5550 St. Laurent. Free. 288-6401

Thursday, May 18

7:00 p.m. **FEWQ** and The Canada Council present readings by **Carolyn Zonailo** and **Stephen Morrissey**. Dollard des Ormeaux Library Atrium, 12001 Boul. de Salaberry, Dollard des Ormeaux. Free. 934-2485.

7:30 p.m. **Le Centre Interculturel Strathearn** and **The Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre** present **Voices of Diversity**, multilingual poetry and prose. Strathearn, 3680 Jeanne Mance. Free. 982-1812.

Monday, May 22

8:30 p.m. **Les Maux-dits/Mots-dits**: open stage poetry, interactive theatre and music every Monday. Maison de la Culture Mondiale. 3812 St. Laurent. 284-5198.

Tuesday, May 23

7:30 p.m. **Urban Wanderers** and **danger!** present **Trevor Ferguson** reading from *The Urban Wanderers Reader* and *The Fire Line*. Bistro 4, 4040 St. Laurent. Free. 484-3186.

Monday, May 29

8:30 p.m. **Les Maux-dits/Mots-dits**: open stage poetry, interactive theatre and music every Monday. Maison de la Culture Mondiale. 3812 St. Laurent. 284-5198.

Tuesday, May 30

7:00 p.m. **The Beggar's Opera: Will Be Done**, by **Anne Lambert** PWM office at the Strathearn, 3680 Jeanne Mance, room 310. Free. 487-7807 or 843-3685.

8:00 p.m. **The Double Hook Book Shop** presents a reading by **QSPELL** award-winning poet **Raymond Filip**. Double Hook, 1235A Greene Avenue. Free. 932-5093.

LAUNCHES

Wednesday, May 3

7:30 p.m. **The Sunflower Book Center** presents the launch of *Desert Wisdom: Sacred Middle Eastern Writings from The Goddess Through the Sufis*, by **Neil Douglas-Klotz**. Sunflower Book Center, 5552 Monkland. Free. 483-0485.

Listings were accurate at time of publication.

Please call the number listed for information on a particular event.

Friday, May 5

7:00 p.m. **Nebula Bookstore** presents the launch of *The Lions of Al-Rassan*, by **Guy Gavriel Kay**. Nebula, 1452 St. Mathieu. Free. 932-3930.

Tuesday, May 23

6:00 p.m. **The Double Hook Book Shop** presents the launch of *Endangered Species*, by **Mary Soderstrom**. Double Hook, 1235A Greene Avenue. Free. 932-5093.

Wednesday, May 24

7:30 p.m. **The Jewish Public Library** presents the launch of *First Fruits '95*, an anthology of prose and poetry by Montreal and area high school students in English, French, Hebrew and Yiddish. **Josh Freed** will be guest speaking. Joseph and Ida Berman Auditorium of the library, 5151 Cote Ste. Catherine. Free. 345-2627

MISCELLANEOUS

Tuesday, May 9

12 noon **Coles Bookstore** presents **Timothy Findley** signing his latest release, *The Piano Man's Daughter*. Coles, 1171 Ste. Catherine West. Free. 849-0301.

Wednesday, May 10—Saturday, May 13

8:30 p.m. **Le Centre Interculturel Strathearn** and the **DuoDance Company** present *Of Fire and Sword*, choreographed by **Cameron MacMaster**, poetry by **Justin McGrail**. Strathearn, 3680 Jeanne Mance. \$18, \$15 for students and seniors. 948-2575.

Monday, May 15

8:00 p.m. **The Jewish Public Library** and the **Montreal Holocaust Memorial Center** present the **Paul Trepman Memorial Lecture**, with Professor

Davis Roskies speaking on *Inside 'Oyheg-shabos': Yiddish Writing in the Ghettos*. Joseph and Ida Berman Auditorium, 5151 Cote Ste. Catherine. Free. 345-2627.

Tuesday, May 23

12 noon **Nebula Bookstore** welcomes everyone to the Grand Opening of their new location at 1832 Ste. Catherine St. W. Refreshments. Free. 932-3930.

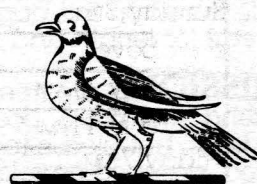
Thursday, May 25

12 noon **The Jewish Public Library** presents **Helen Bassel** reviewing *Blue Mountain*, by **Meir Shalev** as part of their 1994/1995 Book Review Series, **Israeli Writers in Translation**. Joseph and Ida Berman Auditorium of the library, 5151 Cote Ste. Catherine. \$2. 345-2627.



The Word

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RADIO and TELEVISION

CBC Radio presents **Between the Covers**, a nightly reading of best selling novels by authors from around the world.

May 1 to May 5 *Casino and Other Stories*, by Bonnie Burnard. Saskatchewan writer Burnard serves up five stories about growing up, capturing the pains and pleasures involved in these everyday, lifelong journeys. Produced by Wayne Schmalz. **May 8 to May 19** *Mr. Blue*, by Jacques Poulin. In his latest novel, a leading Québécois writer mingles fable and reality. Mr. Blue, a cat, leads his owner Jim to a cave full of mysteries and stories. Produced in Montreal by Jane Lewis. **May 22 to June 2** *Moodie's Tale*, by Eric Wright. Fresh from England, our hapless hero stumbles into a topsy-turvy education and then escapes to the wilds of Canada. This spoof takes on academia, CanLit and roughing it in the bush. Produced by Dagmar Kaffanke-Nunn.

CINQ-FM presents **Stanley Asher** reviewing **Books on Popular Culture Themes**.

May 2 *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World*, by Louis H. Feldman; *Treasury of Jewish Lore: Poems, Quotations and Proverbs*, edited by David C. Gross; *The Mezuzah in the Madonna's Foot*, by Trudi Alexy. **May 9** *Lion of Judah*, a

novel by Victor Ostrovsky; *Revolution until Victory: The politics and History of the PLO*, by Barry Rubin. **May 16** *This Business with Elijah*, by Sheldon Oberman; *The Gate to Perfection: The Idea of Peace in Jewish Thought*, by Walter Homolka and Albert H. Friedlander. **May 23** *The Jew in the Lotus*, a poet's rediscovery of the Jewish identity in Buddhist India; *A Death in Jerusalem: The Assassination by Jewish Extremists of the First Arab-Israeli Peacemaker*, by Kati Marton. **May 30** *Lifecycles: Jewish Women on Life Passages and Personal Milestones*, edited by Rabbi Debra Orenstein, Vol. 1; *Himmelfarb*, a novel by Michael Kruger.

CBC Radio presents **Writers & Company**, with host **Eleanor Wachtel** speaking to literary figures from all over the world.

May 7 The final show of the series on Quebec authors: playwrights Rene Daniel Dubois and Dominic Champagne, and Lise Bissonnette, publisher of Le Devoir. **May 14** Jayne Anne Phillips talking about her new novel, *Shelter*. **May 21** British travel writer Colin Thubron, author of *Among the Russians*. **May 28** Pulitzer Prize-winner Annie Dillard.

CKUT presents **Stanley Asher** reviewing **Books on Jewish Themes**.

May 6 *The Oxford Book of Comic Verse*, edited by John Gross; *A Brief History of American Culture*, by Robert M. Crunden; *Run, Run, Run: The Lives of Abbie Hoffman*, by Jack Hoffman and Daniel Simon. **May 13** *The Chicago Gangster Theory of Life*, by Andrew Ross; *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place*, by George Lipsitz; *Encyclopedia of the Blues*, by Gerald Herzhaft. **May 20** *Good Rockin' Tonight: 20 Years with Elvis*, by Joe Esposito and Elena Oumano; *Music Directory Canada, 6th Edition*; *Don't Ask Forever: My Love Affair with Elvis*, by Joyce Bova; *Study Tours '94 (7th ed.)*, by Vicky Busch. **May 27** *The Book of Bad Virtues: A Treasury of Immortality*, by Tony Hendra; *Nowhere to Run: The Story of Soul Music*, by Gerri Hirshey; *On the Go at 50 Plus: A Canadian Handbook for Mature Travellers*, by Isobel Warren.

CKUT presents **Literature Montreal**, with host **Richard Weintrager** speaking with literary figures from Montreal

and across Canada.

May 5 an interview with The Last Poets, from Harlem, N.Y.C. **May 19** an interview with Timothy Findley.

CJAD presents **Book Banter**, with host **Stuart Nulman** reviewing books and discussing the latest news in the publishing industry.

Friday, May 5, 11:00 p.m. Special Firesale Show. **Monday, May 8, 10:45 p.m.** *Victory 1945*, by Desmond Morton and J.L. Granatstein; *If You're Talking to Me, Your Career Must be in Trouble*, by Joe Queenan. **Monday, May 15, 10:00 p.m.** Firesale Show: *October 1964*, by David Halverstam; *Diamonds of the North*, by William Humber. **Monday, May 22, 10:45 p.m.** *An Anthropologist on Mars*, by Oliver Sacks; *Breaking the Surface*, by Greg Louganis. **Monday, May 29, 10:45 p.m.** TBA.

WCFC TV presents two films.

May 8, 9:00 p.m. Kenneth Branagh and Emma Thompson in *Much Ado About Nothing*. (Masterpiece Theatre) **May 9, 8:00 p.m.** *Ethan Frome*. (American Playhouse)

CBC Radio presents **The Mystery Project**, featuring radio plays about Becker, a detective in Banff in the 1920's. Saturday at 6:30 p.m.

May 6 Episode #4: Hotels are my Life **May 13** #5: A Friend from Chicago **May 20** #6: A Single Green Feather

CBC Radio presents **Monday Night Playhouse**, featuring radio plays on The Arts Tonight, Monday 8:30 p.m.

May 1 *Stop Talking Like That* by Judith Thompson **May 22** *Hosanna* by Michel Tremblay **May 29** *My Shakespeare* by David William

CBC Radio presents **Sunday Showcase**, Sunday 10 p.m.

May 7 *Stop Talking Like That* by Judith Thompson **May 14** *Half an Acre* by David Bolt **May 21** *The Mostly True Story of Pearl Hart — Bandit Queen* by Beverly Cooper **May 28** *Part I of Hamlet* by William Shakespeare, starring Kenneth Branagh.



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May 17: OUMA seeks OUZO. An interactive, multi-sensual reading.
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Programme	Station	Time	Host	Content
Literature Montreal	CKUT 90.3 FM	Friday 6PM	Richard Weintrager	Interviews. see above.
Grey Matters	CKUT 90.3 FM	Thursday 7-8PM	Fortner Anderson.	Lectures.
Dromostexte	CKUT 90.3 FM	Thursday 8-9PM	Fortner Anderson.	Top 40 Spoken Word
Books on Jewish Themes	CKUT 90.3 FM	Tuesday 7PM	Stanley Asher	Reviews. see above.
Books on Popular Culture	CINQ 102.3 FM	Saturday 9:30AM	Stanley Asher	Reviews. see above.
Between the Covers	CBC 940 AM	Monday—Friday 10:15PM	Serialized novel readings. see above.	
Saturday Spotlight	CBC 940 AM	Saturday 5:08PM	Shelley Pomerance	Arts in Quebec.
Writers & Company	CBC 940 AM	Sunday 3PM	Eleanor Wachtel	Literary figures. see above.
Book Banter	CJAD 800AM	see above.	Stuart Nulman	Reviews. see above.
Selected Shorts	WCFC 91.9 FM	Thursday 11AM	Actors read short stories by acclaimed authors.	
Word Jazz	WCFC 91.9 FM	Thursday 11PM	Ken Nordine	Melodies of the mind.
Tell Me A Story	WCFC 91.9 FM	Friday 7 PM	Contemporary authors reading from their work.	
Voices and Visions	WCFC TV Ch.57	Friday 11AM	Documentary profiles of 20th century American poets.	

may 1995

Bistro 4

bouffe • bière • café

29 & 30 April

Genesis Hall Jazz Band

1 May

Enough Said: Apocalyp's Whimper

Ann Diamond, Lee Gotham, Ian Stephens & Lynn Suderman

6 & 7

American Blues Band

7

Cinema Zero

12

Corridors reading
Gary Geddes

15

Women of Words

21

Cinema Zero

23

Urban Wanderers
Trevor Ferguson

24 & 25

Francine LaRose

4040 St-Laurent / 844-6246
(édifice vert coin duluth)

Monday. 20h30 Les Maux-dits/Mots-dits at Maison de la Culture. Apocalyp's Whimper Enough Said! 9:00pm Bistro 4	2	3 WED- NES- DAY. Launch of Desert Wisdom...	4 A FEWQ/Canada Council reading... Mark Abley & Anna Fuerstenberg in D.D.O.	FRIDAY Guy Gavriel Kay launch at Nebula Urban Wanderers: DAVID HOMEL, DOUGLAS B. SMITH at Water Library	6 P.W.M.: Don Drick's Barocco Romano, a reading.
7 BOOKS! BREAKFAST! 10 am! TIMOTHY FINDLEY DAVID HOMEL GERALD CLARK	Monday again 20h30 Les Maux-dits Mots-dits	9 Timothy Findley at Cole's THE Double Hook presents SONYA SHARSTEDT SLAM! VOX HUNT at Bar Maître Renard 8:00pm	10 of Fire and Sword at the Strathcona Centre	11 It's the \$5 CABARET! with The Fluffy Pagan Echoes at Lion d'Or doors at 7:30 show at 8!	FRIDAY 12 CORRIDORS: Gary Geddes is reading at Bistro 4
14 BOOKS! BREAKFAST! 10 am! JULIUS MELNITZER CHARLES FORAN ALLEN ABEL	Every Monday Maux-dits! 20h30 Mots-dits	16 The Beggar's Opera The Glass Eye. The Double Hook presents Akhtar Maraghi	17 QUMA seeks QUZO at Boomerang 9:00pm	18 1 pm Another FEWQ/Canada Council reading... Carolyn Zenailo + Stephen Morrissey (in D.D.O.) 7:30 - Voices of Diversity	20
21 BREAKFAST?	Mon-dits Maux-days 20h30 Mots-dits à la Maison de la Culture	23 J. MARY Soderstrom GRAND OPENING!!! of the new Nebula. Urban Wanderers: TREVOR FERGUSON	24 Launch of First Fruits '95 JOSH FREED guest speaker CORRIDORS: Ann Diamond reads at Bistro 4	25 The Jewish Public Library presents Helen Bassel reviewing Blue Mountains	26
28 Books?	29 20h30 Maux-dits Mots-dits	30 The Beggar's Opera The Will Be Done by Ann Lambert The Double Hook presents Raymond Filip	31 look for June's index - Tessera - Fringe Magnets	<div>ind ex</div> <p>For more complete info on these events check the listings. Listings are free. Call 514.495.1847.</p>	

index magazine, may 1995 ■ 7

Peter Dubé is a writer/performer completing a graduate programme at Concordia. He is a frequently seen fag about town & spends much time arguing about things nobody else cares about.

Janus Peter Dubé

Blackmaw.
Snaggletoothgrinofbrokenbeams. And shatteredwallboard. Hellmouth.
Drunk. A little.
I saw a door like this in a dream once, a long time ago. It opened up, a long tongue of empty space in an overwhite wall. Too black. It frightened me somehow, so I stretched out my hand ahead, to probe at it, to test its substance. As my hand passed through its frame it vanished into a blackness absolute as a chemical formula. All trace of my arm ended at the limit of this door.
I woke before I could pull my arm back, and to this day I know nothing of what happened to it.

Now, I pass through this more particular door, for easily the hundredth time, filled with a fear and a wonder. I may lose myself as wholly as a dream of disappearing parts.

Two. Three. Four. Five. Six steps down. An empty room, floor visited with moldering boxes and coiled lengths of metal wiring, or hoses. It is too dark to know. Crowded with the details of a technology I do not understand.

stand. An unfinished basement, abandoned in its imperfections.

I remember Louis' words to me, spoken in a whisper, hardly enough to force its way through cigarette smoke and music, laughter and gorgeous obscenities, hardly enough to reach my ears.

"They'll come for all of us in the end."

I remember Louis' smile, too. Its crookedness, the space between his teeth in its distant right corner. Its unconscious seductiveness. I almost let myself smile too.

"They will. I know that they will."

At the wall, the far back wall, is a row of windows, boarded up, sealed and half-smashed now, the drooling of street lamps dripping into the room? This weak light can not fill the space.

I do not want it.

Every time I come here I wonder if it

Janus

will be the last time. Know it will not. Every time I arrive I want to stand on top of something tall, a ladder, a mountain, a stack of my old diaries and remember every time before it. I want to yell at the top of my lungs so the whole world knows these places still exist and we can make our partial magics in them still. But this spare hold on the world is so tenuous even noise can break the spell. I keep my silence and I watch my step.

The ground is covered with debris.

Underneath the row of windows men have left markings on the wall. Crude figures in lewd postures. Words. Slogans. Hope.

"Fuck me hard."

"Queers — BASH BACK!"

"Act up — Jesus did."

"It's 4 am, do your children know where you are?"

"Love cures everything. Sex changes it all"

There are naked bodies with erections of mythological proportions, Euclidean globes of buttock, the shoulders of a minotaur. There are horrible drawings, beautiful drawings, breathtaking things. Still, unchanged from last visit, one image, one something that no other hand has dared to cover. There.

Silent in its space, figure of a man reclining underneath one of the mutilated windows. He is depicted large as life, languid as an odalisque, glamorous as a legend. His legs are full and muscular, his chest as massive as his arms are powerful. He leans back on one elbow, propping his torso up, his neck bent slightly forward, but there is no head at the end of the neck. The fine chalk lines that tattoo his naked body on the graying, dirty wall stop, abruptly, at the neck in a jagged edge. His second arm reaches out from the unimaginable other side of his outlined body in a graceful curve. Curve of bicep, crook of elbow, arc of the forearm's vascularity to tapering, elegant fingers. Fingers that, in their turn, clasp his severed head by the back of the skull and tilt it's drooping eyes so slightly downwards with an indifferent gaze. Who can say if the devastated neck is wondering at his lips or the eyes are lost in a marvel of nipple.

I pass him by, walk onwards to the far end of the basement.

Here, in the darkest corner of the basement, is a hole in the roof. When you stand on the rubble carefully assembled below it, you can reach up and pull yourself through that hole, and enter an upper floor. So I do.

The windows are still boarded here, and conspicuously undamaged. It is dark, the noises of the street are faint as hissings. It smells like stale piss and sweat and the place is filled with flickerings of cigarette ends and the passage of shadows in the distance. Footsteps echo slightly and, irregularly, you can hear a stumble, maybe a fall.

Louis, I imagine, would laugh, inappropriately, at that. He laughs so often, so easily. I am never certain how genuine it is. The shrill, enduring laugh comes too quickly, a half-beat before the event, or the joke, is over.

"But it's funny," he says. And there may be so little time left for funny, he leaves unsaid, but I know it waits in the back of his head like a new and dusty motorcycle you don't have the money to have repaired waits, an unaffordable dream, in the back of a garage.

I climb the stairs, completed on this floor, to the next level.

The darkness is no less thick though the space is less open. On this level the distant, and less distant, shadows navigate their way through a warren of corridors and half-completed walls. Here they linger in empty door frames and at the farther edges of curious hallways.

Across from the landing a blonde young man with the face of a seraph snuffles and wipes his nose too often. His pants are loose and hang low on his hips showing a length of belly white as a sturgeon's. His inattention is contrived and appealing. He leans against an open door, behind which is a room that seems warmer than where I am standing. He guards it like the gateway to an Eden given to the vipers.

He slouches uninterruptedly as I step off the staircase and pass down the corridor, one hand in my pocket, leaving him to himself.

In other doorways, other men. Some younger, some older, all of them in postures of geometric regularity and unending interest. Stances like hard-ons looking for a comfortable place in tight jeans. One man sits on a huge spool of something, lit cigarette in his left hand, the other high on his thigh. Long, dark sideburns frame his jaw line and almost meet a patchy goatee. As I pass he takes a long haul of the butt and exhales slowly. I look at him slowly as I turn the corner just behind. Then there is a room. A large room.

It is closed on three sides, at the back the wall is unfinished brick, a stack of neglected wallboard stands in tidy rows in a corner. Half a dozen men are far from filling it. In a corner opposite to the wallboard one man leans against the wall, his head tilted upwards, his eyes unfocused on the ceiling. Another is on his knees before him with his head busy at the other's unbuttoned jeans. The sounds that slip through his mouth figure in no language and are recognizable in any of them. He sucks at his standing partner with a vehemence and joy that floats like humidity in the air and makes us all a little more sweaty.

His head bobs back and forth like a pendulum until his partner's hand pulls him down, closer to him. A very different sound now, deeper, rougher. The standing man, I can't call him his friend, I can't know, has pulled his eyes from the ceiling and looks at the one on his knees. Maybe he's looking at his cock, the way it forces the other one's mouth into a strained O. The one with the O shaped mouth is

reaching up towards his partner's chest now. His hands move busily underneath the T-shirt he is wearing, making strange lumps and strains against the fabric. A dozen different movies where monsters force their way out of human chests run through my mind at a terrifying rate. What strange things might come of the heart of this moaning man, I wonder as his hips move slowly and regularly once again.

I can't watch this any longer. I find a staircase at the end of the room and climb to another floor.

There is always a certain nervousness in these places. A feeling like an airport lounge, a constant wondering who might show up next.

"They'll come for all of us in the end," I remember and imagine a painted head turning suddenly, two floors below.

Louis likes to talk about his fears. He tells stories when he's drunk about his travelling, about a night on the banks of a holy river. A night filled with red hibiscus petals and smells he has never really come to terms with. He talks about ten thousand half naked pilgrims crying in one massive voice "Jai Ma! Jai Ma! JaiMaJaiMaJaiMa!" He tells me wonderful things about unobstructed moonlight, the shadows rib-cages make on thin bodies, the noise of brazen gongs shunting aside the sound of flowing waters and dazzling torch-light. Wonderful things that mean nothing to me with my unrequited passion for nightfall and neon neon.

"They will. I know that they will."

They will put handcuffs on all these feral angels while they are busy laughing at the fabulous views that fill their fall. And we will have laughed.

They will hide us from view even more effectively that these places we claim as our own. And we will find new darknesses, or invent them.

They will try to take us out of time. But we will not have been there.

Top floor. There is no going higher.

This floor is a graveyard. All that they left when they left is the framework of beams and two by fours and door posts. The bones of rooms. The remains of human handiwork. It is more quiet than the rest of this, building?

I keep my silence and I watch my step.

A few metres ahead there is, I know, a gaping hole in the floor that will lead an unwary walker downwards. It is a wonder that I've never seen anyone fall through it. It is as wide as a man is tall, a puddle of wet darkness deeper than the surrounding room. It opens up out of nowhere like an invitation from a dangerous stranger. Empty, defiant, final. From time to time the noises of sex drift upwards from the floor below, distorted, changed somehow in the voyage, maybe louder, often more reverberant. They lose their specificity, the men's voices no longer recognizable, becoming more general and more real. It is a sound of deep pleasures gone away from their source. They are available and reassuring. But the hole is uncertain.

I move, carefully, around it.

Beyond the pit, a man walks among the narrow tines of wood. He is tall, attractive and has removed his shirt which now dangles from a back pocket. His hair falls just short of his shoulders and as I first see him he is pushing it back from his eyes with his left hand.

I take my hand from my pocket and work my way through the scaffolding. I pass on his left side and take a few more steps where I lean against one of the uprights. He stops walking.

I turn my head so he can look back, if he wants to, without my noticing. I notice.

Outside a car backfires loudly and a voice screams something I do not recognize. Street lamps are filling the roads with a soft glow I can not see but that would shimmer

mer shimmer off this man in a way that would be flattering.

"I know."

He has stopped moving. He turns and walks towards me.

Where is the plane that passes overhead bound for? Who are the people on it and what are they leaving behind? I question and his hand is on me. It reaches out and rubs against my crotch as I start to get hard. His hand through my jeans feels, rough? There is a shadow of beard on his cheeks and chin, his mouth is slightly open. I reach up to tug at a nipple and he lets his breath out suddenly. I kiss him. The taste or odour of beer fills my mouth.

His hand fumbles with the buttons on my fly. I reach around him to grab onto his ass, roughly. He grinds back to meet my hand and I know. I break the kiss and bend down to bite him on the neck, the shoulder.

His jeans open easily and slide down over his ass. My fingers are in his mouth as his pants fall around his ankles. His butt is smooth, firm and responsive as I bend him from the waist. Our shadows on the wall disappear into each other. White. His ass is very white, visible even in this building's obscurity. One of my hands holds the back of his neck so I slap his buttocks with the other. The sound shatters the stillness like a mirror, but there is no luck to think of here. I smack him again. A groan slides out of him. Again. Again. Again. It is too dark to see it clearly but I know his cheeks are turning pink. Again.

The sound of brazen gongs. The absence of torchlight. Red hibiscus.

Somewhere below me a chalk man walks the world with strides as wide as a miracle.

The rubber rolls over my cock easily and I enter him as a purple curtain passes over my eyes. Piles of my old diaries and on every page "Come sweet slumber." He is hot inside and I fuck as slowly as I can at this moment, this place. In and out and in and out and nothing I remember comes to mind. I do not know, I do not know, I don't know. He is making noises underneath me as articulate as a debate. I am closer now than I have ever been.

Louis saying something I do not understand. I do not know. I do not know.

Then, in the centre of the sky, at its highest point, my pineal gland spits something out, like a bitter mouth—filling with taste, an image, a vision of something dark and wrinkled. A spot of unthinkable blackness, null point of energy and matter, indescribably tight, closed in upon itself. Knotted and velvety like the asshole on a man, on this man. It cracks open like a man's asshole too and floods the sky with a darklight, phosphorescent shadows, blacklight, notlight, shutting down the stars, covering the emasculated moon in something sticky and negating, blocking out all of the world's lights so I can consummate an act I can never tell my mother about. JaiMaJaiMaJaiMa. The world, my eyes, my brain are black and falling into greater blackness yet. And I am coated in sweat underneath this leather jacket.

He screams just as the lights come back on.

Then I stand him up. He is smiling, a space between the teeth at the corner of his mouth. I kiss him again, his lips dry and soft, his mouth filled with a fading fearfulness and drunk.

Red hibiscus, drifting through the torch-light.

"They'll come for all of us in the end."

The sound of sirens, passing by.

"And if they can't?"

LETTER TO ADAM, or why i tell you stories about people you don't know

"your body moves to the beat my thought set up, just as my hand writes by what it hears of you, out there somewhere."

-bronwen wallace

she was a poet like a river flowing over stone, molding her shape to it, the caress changing them both slowly, while she learns, with a lover's intimacy the stone surface and against it, her own. because

a body can not know itself without touch.

i know i clutter you with strangers to create the place i pour myself into, because i wonder if i could know myself without them, without the rituals we make. like cooking with jeanette, and the one time allie was there watching us, amazed at how we never got in each other's way, how i knew when to stir the sauce as jin added spices, so aware of the other, not having to think where one of us stopped and the other began, having worked it all out, moving along each other to ourselves. foolish stories some of them, couldn't even tell you what they tell, or why it is important to describe the night i stayed up dancing to janis joplin with genivieve, or why the names matter but i can't tell myself without them, can't tell myself now, without you. but

i am not searching for the source, the point intertwining began, but for the textures it gives to living. i want to write through the stone that presses up against me, teaches me my shape, so i can give this line the rhythm of what i know, so it wraps round me warm and comfortable, takes on the shape of my body, this thing i live through, this thing that knows itself only through touch.

how many angels do you think dance on the head of your cock?

i'm not really that negative
about sex or love, but
it's just so damned hard
to write a love poem. maybe

it's because i never have time, before
the doves, heavenly messengers
outside my window
start cooing fuck you, fuck you

fuck you and yesterday's dinner on
the kitchen table we didn't
clear before you took me in your arms
and pressed into me, cock
hard with your long day,
your work load, your deadline while i
contemplate
your caress
endearments, the oooooangelbaby dropped
on the corner of the bed
i curl into like revenge, because
this morning offers too much wisdom, last
night's limp lettuce leaves prophesy
the future, deferred til i come home
and nothing has changed except

you're not that hangover i left for you, who
counted the angels dancing on the head
of his cock, who'd get so fucked and me
along with him for company thinking love
was poison from that cup and
it isn't that bad

your face content, kissing me
after you'd zipped
the universe comfortably into your levis
even though i feel like some
song you've forgotten but still hum
without realizing as you plow
through your day into
my night and the security
my cradle hips will rock
you, rock you rock-a-bye
baby til morning, when maybe
you'll get breakfast, or i'll wake
to you soft behind me, whispering my name:
like it's the only word you know, me knowing
this is ok, ok until you ignore the pressure
of my ass wanting you,

choosing sleep instead and i roll
round remembering that night
that night naked you rolled
a cigarette and i crawled up to you
heart a flutter, licked your ankle, sucked
your calf, back of your knee inner
thigh watching your hard on
through its infancy, twirled my tongue
round the tip and sucked you in til
you saw stars explosions it was the big
bang, you behind it all, so
when you opened your eyes
you fell for this ministering angel
on all fours, for
all the wrong reasons, because
i was thinking i want to take you
make you hear music at my tempo, animal
not celestial, but you wouldn't
see me any other way, still keep making your world
with your images, confused when
i don't fit, never suspecting a history
of misinterpretation or maybe it's just
those damned birds
that get me going so that

i can't help but wonder

how many angels you see dancing.

Luba Szkambara may be the real hero
of the next revolution.

Luba Szkambara

share a frustration coming from working within a system that is patriarchal — difficulties in writing, publishing, blah, blah, blah. But the outlets are different.

Buffy: There is this problem I have with a lot of detractors of *l'écriture féminine*, or of other feminist writing: they act as if there is some conscious effort that shapes it. Sometimes I will go back into my work and rework it with some sort of agenda. But though I don't think of myself as a very gendered person, I am, because the world genders me, and by extension my writing is gendered female. I'm not totally motivated by that, or dislocated by it, it's just something I don't have a lot of control over, or wish to. Deliberating too much over my own voice, I lose sight of it.

Taien: On one hand, there is a lot of women's writing that isn't necessarily feminist, meaning that they don't hold certain points of view — their views are not prescriptive; or they portray women in stereotypical ways. But all the same, the very fact they are writing is feminist in a way. For instance, one of the main speakers for Human Life International (the right-wing anti-abortion group) is a woman who gives speeches about how women should remain in the home, in the traditional family. It's very contradictory, because her action is feminist because she is taking power, empowering herself by what she's doing, but then what she says is not — there's this division between action and belief.

Victoria: For myself, a lot of work I've done comes back to my body. In my opinion, the strongest work I've done has come out of writing about my body. At first I felt very good about this, then I was concerned that I would be pigeon-holing myself. But I knew that I had to do it to evolve to something else. I guess primarily it was a way of figuring my shit out — as someone who had so much frustration and confusion about my body when I was younger. It was understanding why I was dealing with all these things, then realizing that it was something recognized by a lot of other women.

Kate: The difficulty of writing from the body is that if the body is a sign and a sign of oppression then you run the risk of always writing from oppression, and of oppression. If you are writing from a body that's been used as sign you want to emphasize the ways you can transgress that sign, blur its boundaries.

Victoria: I have a certain skepticism about talking about things I know nothing about. So I talk about my body — there's no better expert on that than me.

Zoë: Discovering writing, discovering bisexuality, discovering feminism — all happened at the same time for me. Writing has really helped me get through a lot of shit. Writing is a vehicle for knowing myself; it's made me a lot more comfortable with my body, my sexuality. Getting into spoken word has been really cool. I'm playing with ways of presenting myself — just learning to express myself, be really animated in front of a crowd — it's really empowering.

Victoria: In the seventies, the motivation for women getting into performance and video and those sorts of art was that they were new, and didn't come with a history of male domination, and preconceived ideas of what it was supposed to be, like in painting. I think that's still true today. I found that performance was an accessible medium for me in that way.

Denise: I don't know who I'm comparing myself to. I went through a period — about ten years in the '70's and '80's — when I read no books by men. It was not deliberate or conscious. I was just so excited by what women were writing. The '60's and '70's were a very exciting time for women's writing.

Buffy: Being a woman is a very important factor in how I write, but so is being a Maritimer, so is being bisexual, and depending on the moment and depending on the subject, one or another might have priority or authority. I think it's a melange of all these separate yet integrated, or not quite integrated, identities that gives any depth that I could ever want to my work. I think of writing once the same way I think of sexual identity, that it's very fluid, that it shouldn't be in stasis. To ignore some part or others — it's almost disrespectful of the work.

Taien: Looking at post-colonial writing along with women's writing, the two fields cover a lot of the same ground. In literature women have always been equated with the land. So for post-colonial writers escaping colonialism is like women escaping sexism. And post-colonial writing often also tries to move toward a very fragmented style of writing, to escape structure and escape history. Maybe that's writing in the feminine too.

Victoria: I suppose there is a feminist act just in writing, in the sense that I believe that language itself is male-centered, designed for male use, and in that sense for women to enter language, reinscribing language, is very much a feminist act. Some women have gone as far as designing texts in entirely new invented languages, but then you can't understand it. I appreciate the value of doing that but I find it inaccessible. I guess there's a choice to be made between working from the inside or the outside.

Denise: As I get older I know less and less: it's hard to sum up how I feel about being a woman. Maybe there are more contradictions now than when I was young.

Taien: In *Sorties*, Cixous also talks about exploding dichotomies, and I think that's the direction we need to move in.

Erin: I write as a woman and a lesbian, and in a way that refuses the standard social marking of those to elements of identity. I could not do otherwise.

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2. How have gender politics informed, or impinged upon, your experience of writing /publishing /performing in this city?

Zoë: I think I've done a good job of surrounding myself with people who are hip and queer and feminist — so I don't face a lot of problems. If anything I face a lot of expectation, like: "Woo Woo, Cool Woman Writer." But if I were outside a radical environment I think it would be much harder.

Taien: *Corridors* changed me into a man. In my bio: "Taien...he is from Vancouver, he..." and so on. So I was reading about myself as a man, and feeling completely disoriented, jilted, jittered, cut up. I'd never thought of myself as a man — it goes to show how much I don't think about being a woman.

Victoria: I was really bored with a lot of the readings I went to — performances mostly by men, not dealing with gender politics. Just politics. When I perform by myself usually it has been more overtly feminist than with the Fluffy Pagan Echoes. All the same, stuff comes up [with the group], because I'm always trying to be as authentic as I can. You've seen me, if I'm having cramps or whatever I'll go up on stage and say, I'm menstruating, make a big deal out of it. That's fun. That's a performance in itself. But I like the fact that I'm not expected to speak as a woman just because I'm the only woman in the group. Though inevitably I do.

Kate: I can't say I've immersed myself in the writing/publishing scene. As for performance, I wish there were more of a feeling that it's just as valid for a woman to get up and spout and yell and scream and sing and do all kinds of crazy things. It's not just a man's realm. Or it's not just men's place to show the egocentrism it takes to get up and perform. There is this idea that this egocentrism is part of male development, part of a male writer's development. That's what we're conditioned to see as normal, as natural. I like for women to get up and take that over and do it differently. I like to do more than just read my work, I get up and sing and do other things. I think that's going beyond an acceptance of what's being done. I couldn't say it's not being done. I do think there is an eagerness to receive women doing performance in this city.

Ummni: The scene? You mean, the coed, anglo, het scene? It's really hurtin'. It's really hurtin' for some analysis of gender privilege, and race and class. What I do with my own writing, at least with my outreach writing, is concentrate on women's everyday experiences. I'm talking about women who don't consider themselves

writers or philosophers, or feminists, for that matter. It's about challenging the elitism of this idea of "the writer" and questioning the usual idea of what is worth listening to, who is worth listening to.

Buffy: Gender politics in the city? One of the reasons I put out the zine [Gap Tooth Bitches] is I didn't think there was a venue for the voice I have — female oriented, feminist minded, very much sex positive. For a lot of people still, [my] being feminist and pro-sex, pro-porn, makes them uncomfortable. To a certain degree I side-stepped the issue. I said if I'm going to write an article called "My mouth is an orifice," which I took a hell of a lot of flack over by the way, I might as well put it out myself.

Denise: A funny thing is that the two publishers I considering taking my book to are both women. Again, that was unconscious but I am sure it was not accidental. I'm in a writing group with some great writers, and it's the men in that group whose opinion I absolutely depend upon: men close to me tend to be my editors, but when it comes to finding a publisher, I guess I can't imagine a man being interested in these stories. The one place where I've felt the domination of men was at Concordia. I liked the people in my classes, but there just weren't enough women on faculty. Everyone will say that. There, I really felt my life was being dominated by men.

Taien: At Concordia, there are only 3 men in my class and 2 are gay, which brings up the question of feminine writing in a different way — for example, Peter Dubé often talks about *écriture féminine* and whether or not his writing is as well. But, there's really only one woman on the faculty, by contrast. If you want a female advisor, you don't have any choices.

Denise: When I first came to Quebec — I'm from the states — I could not believe how gutsy women were here. I feel surrounded by gutsy women in this city. It's a good feeling.

Erin: I don't think I notice. I just do my work, and link best with people considering similar issues in their work, willing to engage those issues in the text, on a textual basis. There is lots of crossing of boundaries. However, I notice the scenes are predominately white, middle class, heterosexual, and a lot of my concerns don't exist or are not valued in those milieus. Je m'en fiche. I only desire to write and to press against the boundaries of what is possible in language, of where meaning comes from and how it shifts, of the markers of social order and where they place me, and how that can be worked through. It is a community of endeavour; there is always lots of excitement. As for the rest, je m'en fous!

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After citing and reciting *l'écriture féminine* you left beloved and the room full with your gratitude, which was considerable. You wanted to know more. After reading the latest issue of *Tessera*, you endeavoured to set up an interview with the editors.

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Kate Alsterlund is a writer, performer and lover of mangos.

Buffy Bonanza is a writer and the producer of *Gap Tooth Bitches*, a right fucked up and charmin' little zine.

Ummni Khan co-hosts CKUT's *Hersay*, is a former editor of *Heridan* and is currently working at assembling an anthology of second language writing.

Erin Mouré works and writes in Montreal.

Taien Ng is currently studying in the Master's Creative Writing programme at Concordia University.

Denise Raig is a writer, former prose editor of *index*, and co-editor of *Hochelaga Press*, and has an adult daughter.

Victoria Stanton is a writer and artist and the only female member of the Fluffy Pagan Echoes, a Montreal performance poetry group.

Zoë Whittall is a performance artist and a member of Women of Words. She recently organized the Rock For Choice Benefit at Woodstock.

reviews

Drawn & Quarterly A Picture Story Book

Gavin McInnes
*Drawn and Quarterly #2,
A Picture Story Book*
edited by Chris Oliveros
Drawn & Quarterly 1995

Chris Oliveros has a pretty good scam going with the *Drawn & Quarterly* anthologies. He's got so much props in the comics community, he can get away with murder. You see, he only pays the artists about \$75 a page, and they put up with it because *Drawn & Quarterly* is such a fancy publication.

A few years ago however, Oliveros was scrounging for people and losing money left and right. He had a few ads around New York desperately seeking cartoonists, which led him to artists like J.D. King and Peter Bagge. After his New York punk phase he hooked up with Canadian comic gods like Joe Matt (Rolling Stone's "hottest" cartoonist) and Harvey-award-winner Chester Brown.

After gaining comic respect with the aforementioned greats Oliveros was able to go for the gold. *Drawn & Quarterly, A Picture Story Book*, is a prime example of hard work paying off. Each of the 5 contributors in this anthology have more respect and admiration than the Pope and are worth more money than Donald Trump.

David Mazzucchelli starts things off with the

cover and a unique 16 page story about a visit to France. He recently dropped out of mainstream comics after deciding to take his art seriously and the result is mind blowing. Mazzucchelli uses rough educated strokes that look more like paintings than comics and captivate the reader with a slow confident groove. His independent masterpiece *Rubber Blanket* is completely hand-made, completely original and testifies to his sincere love of the craft. Mazzucchelli's devotion makes Mother Teresa look like a lazy slut.

Eric Drooker's colour scratchings are next. The Native American anarchist from New York is most famous for his epic graphic novel *The Flood* which was done completely on scratchboard. Drooker's first-hand knowledge of being shit-poor juxtaposed with flawless, artistic layout provide a commentary which is almost too biting.

Loustal and his writer Fromental do *The Ghost of Whitechapel* which is beautifully water-coloured and apparently written by a prodigy. The piece revolves around a saucy "coming of age" story that gave me a boner because she had those naughty socks on that stop at the thighs.

We get a break from this comic book hurricane when accomplished ink-fag Maurice Vellekoop contrasts the life of a super model with a loveable

homo. Despite looking a bit too much like Seth (of the comic *Palooka Ville*, also from D&Q), Vellekoop's art is getting published everywhere but your Nana's panties and deservedly so.

A Picture Story Book finishes itself with a depressing nightmare about WWII by France's top artist Jacques Tardi. This sad but true depiction of life in the trenches is so captivating it made me cry (well maybe not, but it would have if I had feelings). To a reader, the story is horrifying and impossible to ignore. To a comic artist, the art is perplexingly professional, utilizing techniques never seen before in the medium.

Paying \$75 a page for a Tardi story is something only *Drawn & Quarterly* could get away with. Working out of a modest apartment on Jeanne Mance, Oliveros is publishing a comic anthology that top publishers could only dream of. *The Voice of Montreal* called it gripping, impressive but a bit too slick. *The Mirror* considered it one of the week's artistic events. In the local comics community we call it "right on."

Drawn and Quarterly #2 is available at danger! on St. Laurent for \$6.95.

Gavin McInnes self-publishes Montreal's "most popular mini-comic," *Pervert Comix*. His work is in numerous anthologies.

Just Wandering...

Scott Duncan
*The Urban Wanderers Reader: Three
seasons...and running*
edited by Raymond Beauchemin
and Denise Roig
Hochelaga Press 1995

The Urban Wanderers Reader showcases writings by some of the "mainstays" of English Montreal's literary community. With occasional guests from Ontario, they stopped in at Bistro 4 on Monday nights from the fall of 1993 to the fall of 1994.

The mandate of the series—and the book—was to look at how these "wanderers" make their way through the urban setting with words. The book succeeds as far as wandering is concerned. Each night of the series had a theme: *4X4: We're not Talking Subarus; Aer Lingus; Destinations, Exploring the Outer Limits of Poetry*. And "The Road Less Travelled—Gay and lesbian writers."

There are some gems in this book. Dany Laferrière's piece, "How to get Famous without Getting Tired," is a collection of thought-provoking anecdotes about reactions to his first title—How to Make Love to a Negro (*sans se fatiguer*). "Three Sentences," by Carolyn Marie Souaid, is a haunting poem about "he & I & the body," read during the "Birth Journeys" evening. Harry Standjofski's "Promise" is a witty and warm dramatic monologue about a man interrupted

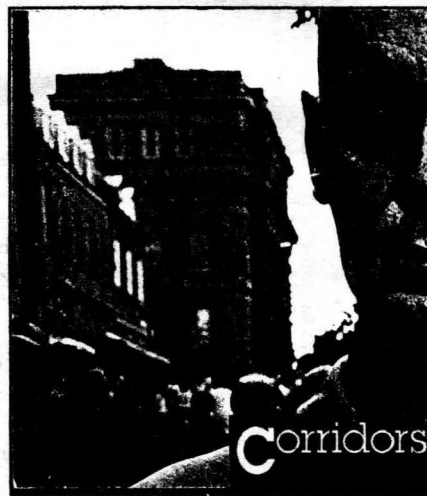
from his porn movies by a stranger giving birth on his motel waterbed.

Unfortunately, some of the best writers in the series don't make it into the book. I would have liked to see work by Ian Stephens, Erin Mouré and Mary di Michele. Weak pieces by Robert Allen ("Irony Jack," written in the 24 hours leading up to a "Day Trips" evening), Jill Battson and others could have been avoided to include a broader spectrum of work, helping to satisfy the urban theme.

The awkward introductions to each section drove me mad. Consider this: "We'd originally wanted to do the reading in a pool hall—in keeping with the manly theme—but one visit to one pool hall convinced us that the thwack of balls would be hard to compete with." The cover art is dull (I think the drawing is of Place Ville Marie) and the design makes it difficult to read the quotes on the back. The typeset and layout are uninteresting. It's a lacklustre package.

The proceeds of the series and of the book go to RECLAIM—the Reading Council for Literary Advance in Montreal—and already they have been able to buy computers for new adult readers. Though the book is uneven, I am encouraged by the tangible support given to such a worthy cause. Seldom do poetry readings, by nature ethereal, have such far-reaching and concrete effects.

The Urban Wanderers Reader is being sold at danger! for \$15 and all profits go to RECLAIM.



Abigail McCullough
Corridors, Volume Two
edited by Eric Williamson
Downtown Press 1995

Out this month is volume 2 of the annual Concordia anthology, *Corridors*, edited again by Eric Williamson. Like last year's, the 1995 edition is made up of the work of established Montreal authors and poets alongside offerings from lesser known writers. This is probably the most inviting aspect of the collection: the opportunity to appraise the newest literary talent in Montreal.

Look for Patrick Borden's novel excerpt and Nishi Sood's short story, "Charlie Beeks Has Two Left Hands". The new names in *Corridors* are mostly poets—and so the contents weigh heavily in this genre's favour. However, the editors would have been wise to concentrate on exploring more from promising

poets such as Anne Stone and Todd Swift, rather than a lending the collection a greater scope of mediocrity.

Perhaps Doug Isaac's status as featured poet prompted him to include a nude photo of himself. (caption: "If Madonna can...") Whatever the case, the pic comes across as sheer tawdriness, though it seems Isaac somehow thought he was being clever or cheeky. You can forgive him that; the strength of his writing allows you to. Poems like "All things come..." and "Ah...had so much" are brimming with intensity, yet every word and metaphor is handled with iron-like discipline. Lesser poets would stumble.

Aesthetically, the cover art is a vast improvement on last year's, but there's not much else that grabs the eye within. The layout and choices of typeface are rather dull. The half dozen photographs that dot the slim volume sadly amount to little more than a blatant attempt for the authors to score some recognition. All of them (save the naked poet) are fairly tiresome snapshots of what appears to be the contributors' night out on the piss.

But, then, like the photograph of the poet au naturel, the shortcomings of the collection can be overlooked. It might not be a terribly exciting or masterfully edited anthology, but to Williamson's credit, Concordia is finally turning out something collective from its writing program. By next year he should have a firmer editorial hand and a sharper, more intelligent product.

Corridors is available at The Word and other bookstores for \$10.

index

index
volume 2
number two
may 1995

Writing in the Feminine in 1995

interviews with
8 writers

art by
Catherine Kidd

Janus
Peter Dubé
8

poems
Luba Szkarbata
9

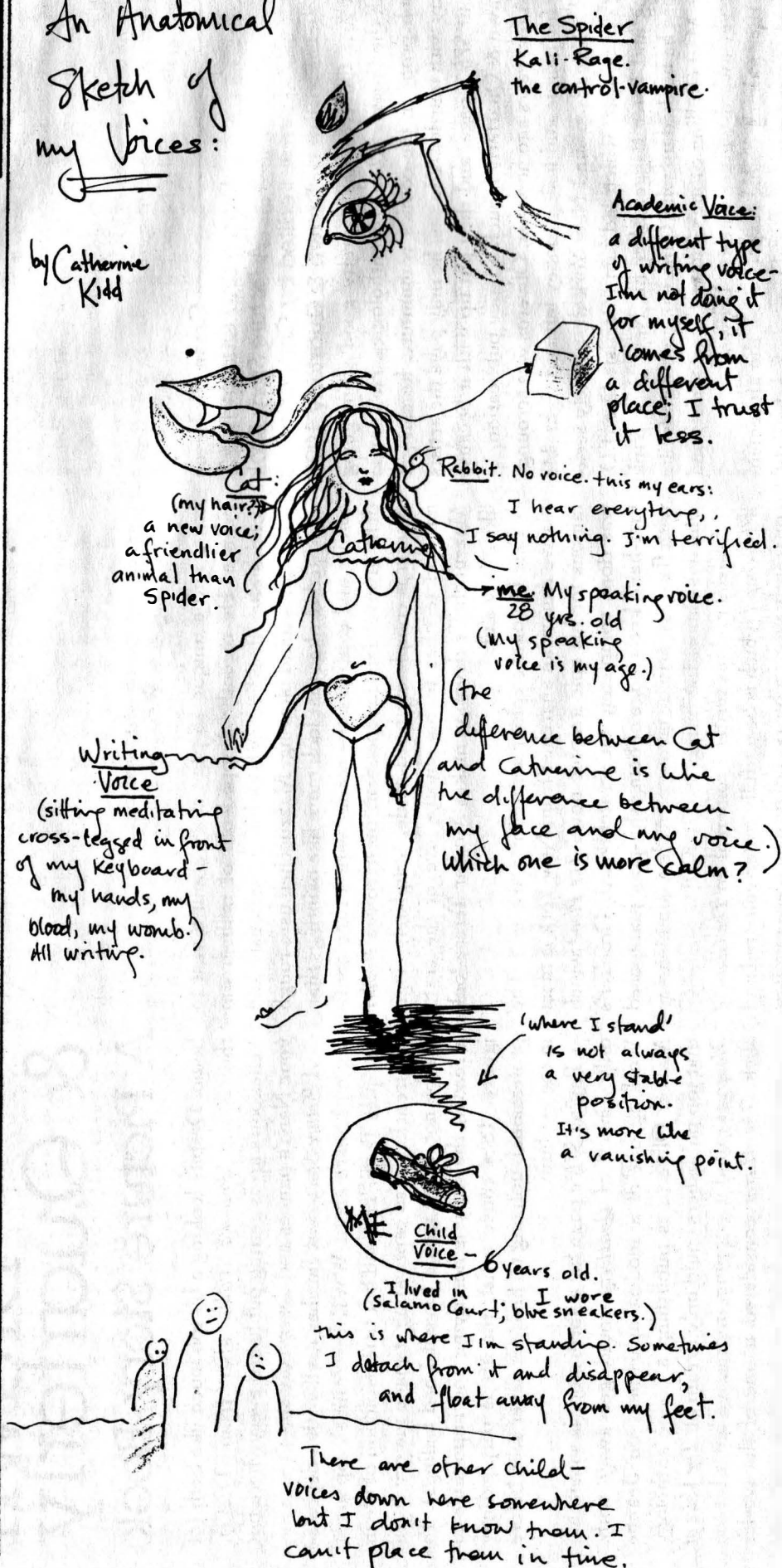
Gavin McInnes on
Drawn and
Quarterly,
Scott Duncan on
The Urban
Wanderers Reader,
Abigail
McCullough on
Corridors
11

features

Editorial.....3
Word is.....3
Listings.....4
Radio Guide.5

An Anatomical
Sketch of
my Voices:

by Catherine
Kidd



Writing in the Feminine in 1995

A collection of interviews in a collection of voices.

by Patrick Salah and Corey Frost

You were sitting around with an old pal chatting about Julia Kristeva's novel *Samurai*, wondering if it really was a take off of De Beauvoir's *The Mandarins*, which you still hadn't read, when your beloved entered the room.

You felt yourself arch and posing under his blank stare, and no less for what next fell from your mouth. "Whatever happened to *l'écriture féminine*, anyway?" Jaws dropped and someone muttered, "Here, in Montreal..." and someone pulled out a big book. You'd barely got your hands on it when some other bunch came in, offered their opinions, began asking questions.

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"Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their own bodies— for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text— as into the world and into history— by her own movement.... Write! Writing is for you, you are for you; your body is yours, take it.... let no one hold you back, let nothing stop you: not man; not the imbecilic capitalist machinery, in which publishing houses are the crafty, obsequious relayers of imperatives handed down by an economy that works against us and off our backs; and not *yourself*. Smug-faced readers, managing editors, and big bosses don't like the true texts of women— female-sexed texts. That kind scares them."

Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa", 1976

1. How do notions of writing (or speaking) "as a woman" affect or influence your creative process/project? Is "women's writing" of necessity, feminist writing?

Buffy: One of the things I like about this piece is that I really engage with it on a visceral level as well as on a cerebral level. That's what I like about women's theoretical writing— you look at someone like Trin T. Minh-ha, who's so theoretically there, but there's this wonderfully personal voice too. It's funny that this is the one you chose—when I feel stuck in my writing, when I'm feeling really dislocated, I will pick it up. I find it really inspiring, like really loud music is inspiring: it gets me back to my desk, to my writing. It's a joyous voice, and one can have a voice of dissent that is joyous, celebratory.

Denise: I should have that quote written here by my computer. The quote I have here now is similar, though: "Screw Guilt." It's one of my favorite slogans. Women tend to feel we don't need much reason to feel guilty, and I think that really holds us back. I find that the maintenance of life, which we all get bogged down in — but still I think women more than men — can take up a life. Just washing the dishes or answering the phone or whatever. I still feel often like I should be doing something else — that my energy is needed somewhere else. But you know what's bizarre? I didn't start writing until I was a single parent, and working full-time — when my kid was just a kid — but in terms of volume it was my most productive time, often I was cranking out a story a week. And in the present, it sounds rather gruesome but I don't feel like I have all the time in the world anymore. I don't have time to put my own ambitions away. We're often afraid, women are afraid, of showing how much we want.

Victoria: I read an article by Hélène Cixous a long time ago that had a huge influence on me. These concepts that just blew me away. I'm realizing that when I'm writing often I use different voices, and sometimes, I'm conscious the voice is feminist. I think I'm trying to access something, trying on different hats — the voice is always from myself, but I'm trying to get to something, back to something, through something, find something.

Kate: I like Cixous' term "the sexed text." I dig that. It's about writing from the inside— inside the body, immersion in sensory experience. There are some problems with her— she's so radical, utopian. You wonder if her project can go anywhere. And her comments about women as the dark continent, are really demeaning. When she was writing this it was for white upper or middle class women; there is a lot of exclusion there.

Ummni: Cixous reminds me of Woolf's *A Room Of One's Own*, in her awareness of the class privilege necessary for writing. You need money, right? At the same time it's a bit tacky. "Write! Writing is for you—" I mean lots of women don't have that option. Another thing it makes me think of is this other book, *Why Aren't There More Creative Women Writers?* That talks about the moments of lucidity that allow you to write, and how women don't have them, because there's always the fear of sexual assault, the threat of violence... I don't buy the idea of a specific women's voice or writing. That tradition of "women's writing" that Cixous is in; it's a white tradition, an accidental tradition. It's racist and classist. When we use that word, "feminist," if we do, we have to keep in mind the plurality behind it.

Erin: The quote is one of many that could have been chosen; it more indicates or "points toward" some very influential texts; it also indicates a starting point rather than an end point, a starting point now 15 or 20 years in the past. And for me, 10 years in the past, since it was 10, no 11, years ago I began reading such texts. The ground has shifted in the 80's from debates in essentialism to and toward debates, and above all WORK, on subjectivity and the constitution of a subject: what does that mean, what does that mean for a woman; how can you inscribe yourself as a female subject, inscribing your own subjectivity, also at the same time on gender and gendering, the realization of the social construction of gender and exploration of the forms and means of that, of the consequences of that for thinking and writing, for subjectivity. The parallel constructions too, of "race," of "sexual identity," how this is constructed socially and played out in and by the body, how these things affect the spoken, and on top of this, how does it relate to the post-modernist view of the fragmentation of identity, identification as process that shifts and is not fixed. Being a woman and a lesbian is to fall into two socially constructed categories (you see the debates and interests do not rely on biological construction of gender... it exists but is not where the intrigue is in terms of positing identity), that are x-centric in terms of the status quo. That status quo has not changed completely since Cixous wrote her words but is dechine, is in question from various angles.

Zoe: [About women's voice:] Obviously all women do not have the same experience, the same voice, but I think women do

continued on page ten